

Message Text

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PASS USDA FOR FAS/FCA/AA/US-USSR SECRETARIAT/ERS/SCHOONOVER

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, UR
SUBJECT: AGATTACHE'S CROP SURVEY TRIP TO NOVOSIBIRSK & BARNAUL
JUNE 8 - 11, 1977

1. SUMMARY: AS WITH ANLAUF'S TRAVEL, MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF TRIP WERE ACHIEVED, I.E., OBTAINED EARLY ASSESSMENT OF CROP CONDITIONS AND A CHECK ON MOISTURE SITUATION FOR COMPARISON WITH METEOROLOGICAL DATA. CONDITIONS OBSERVED IN IMMEDIATE VICINITIES OF BOTH NOVOSIBIRSK AND BARNAUL WERE CONSIDERED TO BE FAIR BY AGATT. THIS, IN HIS VIEW, MEANS NO BETTER THAN AVERAGE GRAIN CROPS FOR THESE GENERAL AREAS UNLESS WEATHER CONDITIONS ARE BETTER THAN AVERAGE DURING REMAINDER OF GROWING SEASON. THIS ASSUMES CROPS SEEN WERE GENERALLY REPRESENTATIVE OF SITUATION ELSEWHERE IN NOVOSIBIRSK OBLAST AND ALTAY KRAY. OFFICIALS IN BOTH LOCATIONS WERE MORE OPTIMISTIC INDICATING THAT SOIL MOISTURES WERE ADEQUATE TO PRODUCE AVERAGE OR BETTER YIELDS AND CROPS WITH NORMAL WEATHER CONDITIONS. MAJOR PROBLEM IS SOIL MOISTURE CONDITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. OBSERVATIONS IN NOVOSIBIRSK: AREA OBSERVED WAS EAST OF CITY FROM
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SOUTHEAST (STARTING AT AIRPORT) TO NORTHEAST (VASKNIL, ESTIMATED 40-50 KILOMETERS. SOIL WAS DRY DOWN TO 3-4 INCHES, BUT ABLE TO BALL AT THIS LEVEL. STAND HEIGHT VARIED FROM 4-7 INCHES, BUT MOST WAS 5-6 INCHES. GERMINATION OF GRAINS WAS ON WHOLE CONSIDERED GOOD, BUT ONLY FAIR ON LATE PLANTED FIELDS, AND CORN (FOR SILAGE), ALTHOUGH JUST EMERGING, LOOKED QUITE SPOTTY. MOISTURE STRESS DID NOT APPEAR SERIOUS, BUT INCLUDED DRY PASTURES, CRACKED SURFACES

OF DRIED PUDDLES ALONG ROAD, SLIGHT ROLLING OF MOST LEAVES IN
FIELDS, YELLOWING OF FIELD EDGES AND FEW SPOTS IN FIELDS WHERE
MOISTURE WAS POOREST, NO LARGE CRACKS IN FIELDS NOTED. OVERALL
STAND CONDITIONS JUDGED TO BE FAIR TO SLIGHTLY ABOVE, BUT RAIN
NEEDED WITHIN 10 DAYS IF 85-90 DEGREE TEMPERATURES CONTINUE.
TEMPERATURES REACHED HIGHS OF 31 AND 32 C. ON JUNE 8 AND 9
RESPECTIVELY, AND FORECAST CALLED FOR NO CHANGE ON JUNE 10.
PERCENTAGE OF PLOUGHED UNGERMINATED AREA APPEARED CLOSE TO THIRD
OF CROP AREA. VISIBILITY FROM PLANE WAS RESTRICTED BY ALTITUDE AND
HAZY TO CLOUDY CONDITIONS, BUT AREA VIEWED EN ROUTE TO BARNAUL
APPEARED IN SOME PARTS TO BE NO MORE THAN 50 PERCENT PLANTED AND
GERMINATED.

3. STATEMENTS OF NOVOSIBIRSK OFFICIALS AND OTHERS: 1977 GRAIN
ACREAGE FOR OBLAST UP ONLY SLIGHTLY FROM 1976; WHEAT DOWN FEW
THOUSAND HECTARES AND BARLEY AND OATS UP. PERCENT OF FALLOW AT
ABOUT 11 TO 12, ALSO ABOUT UNCHANGED. PLANTING WAS COMPLETED ON
SCHEDULE IN THIRD AND FOURTH WEEKS OF MAY. SOIL CONDITIONS AT
TIME RANGED FROM GOOD TO EXCELLENT. WET FALL DELAYED FIELDWORK.
WINTER SNOW COVERAGE GOOD, AVERAGING 75 CENTIMETERS. SPRING WAS
EARLY WITHOUT MUCH PRECIPITATION, BUT COOLED DOWN AGAIN LATE
APRIL. GOOD FRONTAL RAINS RECEIVED IN MAY. ONLY FEW SCATTERED
SHOWERS RECEIVED SINCE MAY 20 AND NONE IN NOVOSIBIRKS. TEMPERATURES
HAVE, IN GENERAL, BEEN ABOUT 5 DEGREES C. ABOVE AVERAGE IN JUNE,
BUT WINDS HAVE NOT BEEN STRONG. OFFICIALS AT INSTITUTE WERE
OPTIMISTIC THAT WITH AVERAGE RAINS, GRAIN YIELDS WOULD BE AT
LEAST AVERAGE AND PROBABLY ABOVE.

4. OBSERVATIONS IN BARNAUL: AREAS OBSERVED WERE SOUTH OF CITY ON
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EAST SIDE OF OB TO DISTANCE OF 60-80 KILOMETERS. VISITED SAME
MODEL SOVKHOZ, "KOMSOMOL," WHICH WAS SEEN BY 1975 SPRING GRAINS
TEAM. SOIL WAS DRY DOWN TO 4-5 INCHES, BUT BALLABLE BELOW THIS
LEVEL. HEIGHT OF STAND WAS FROM 5-9 INCHES WITH MOST AT THE 7-8.
GERMINATION WAS ON WHOLE GOOD, WITH SOME EVEN EXCELLENT. CORN
GERMINATION ALSO SPOTTY DUE LUMPY AND BONE-DRY CONDITION OF
TOPSOIL. LESS SIGNS OF STRESS THAN IN NOVOSIBIRSK, BUT WHEAT
LEAVES WERE ROLLING SLIGHTLY EVEN THOUGH NO YELLOWING WAS NOTED.
TWO 3/8 INCH WIDE SOIL CRACKS SEVERAL METERS IN LENGTH NOTED IN
ONE FIELD. OVERALL STAND CONDITION (ON ABOVE AVERAGE FIELDS
OBSERVED) WAS JUDGED TO BE GOOD. AGAIN, IF TEMPERATURES DON'T
DROP BACK TO AVERAGE OR RAINS NOT RECEIVED IN JUNE, YIELDS
WILL, IN OUR JUDGMENT, NOT EXCEED AVERAGE. THIS ALSO, OF COURSE,
ASSUMES THAT USUAL JULY RAINS ARE RECEIVED AND OTHER CONDITIONS
REMAIN FAVORABLE. BEST FIELD SEEN ON KOMSOMOL LAY KILOMETER OR
SO WEST OF SECOND (SMALLER) RESERVOIR WHICH ARE BOTH WEST OF
CENTRAL BUILDING CLUSTER. WOULD ESTIMATE YIELD POTENTIAL OF THIS
FIELD TO BE 30-35 BUSHELS. PERCENTAGE OF UNPLANTED FIELDS IN THIS
AREA APPEARED TO BE BELOW 20 PERCENT. HIGH TEMPERATURE ON JUNE 10

WAS AROUND 30, BUT DOWN TO 28 ON UNE 11.

5. STATEMENTS OF BARNAUL OFFICIALS: 1977 GRAIN ACREAGE SAID TO BE UP ABOUT 200,000 HECTARES OVER 1976. WHEAT WAS SAID TO BE UP ONLY SLIGHTLY; BIGGEST INCREASE WILL BE IN BARLEY. SAME GENERAL WEATHER PATTERNS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE PREVAILED SINCE LAST FALL, AS IN NOVOSIBIRSK, INCLUDING NO GENERAL RAINS SINCE LATE MAY AND NONE IN AREA OBSERVED. PLANTING SAID COMPLETED ON SCHEDULE BY AROUND MAY 25. BARNAUL OFFICIALS WERE EVEN MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN THOSE IN NOVOSIBIRSK, SAYING IN EFFECT THAT WITH PRESENT SOIL MOISTURE RESERVE LEVELS THEY WERE ASSURED OF ABOVE-AVERAGE YIELDS IF NORMAL JULY RAINFALL IS RECEIVED. SUHAVEY WAS SAID TO NEVER BE A PROBLEM. THEY EXPECT TO MEET THEIR PROCUREMENT GOAL OF 4.0-4.5 MILLION TONS.

6. COMMENT: OFFICIALS IN BARNAUL GAVE DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT THEY BELIEVED THEIR OPTIMISTIC CROP ESTIMATE. MINAG, MOSCOW, ARRANGED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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APPOINTMENTS IN BARNAUL IN ADVANCE OF TRICK'S ARRIVAL. IN NOVOSIBIRSK, REPORTEDLY, THEIR CABLE HAD NEVER REACHED THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BUT THEY SET UP VASKNIL APPOINTMENT THROUGH INTOURIST AFTER OBTAINING MINAG OK. NO EXTENSIVE AUTO TRAVEL POSSIBLE IN EITHER LOCATION. ONLY AVAILABLE FLIGHT TO NOVOSIBIRSK FROM MOSCOW WAS 1:30 AM DEPARTURE.
TOON

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